

## **We are, we are, we are, we are (Being us is okay) by OurLadyofPerpetualWallflowers**

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** M/M, No Dialogue, billy does some thinking, dialogue is so difficult, harringrove challenge, lbr they all need therapy, rated for language, steve probably needs some therapy

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Billy Hargrove, Steve Harrington

**Relationships:** Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2018-02-02

**Updated:** 2018-02-02

**Packaged:** 2022-04-20 16:35:51

**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences

**Warnings:** Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,798

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

It should feel stranger, Billy admits, that Steve Harrington becomes the one person he can be himself with in Hawkins.

It takes time. For the bruises to fade. For Billy to buy the punk kids enough pizza and pay for enough rounds of games at the arcade that they-not forgive him exactly, but agree to give him a chance not to have one bad night be the defining moment of his character. For Billy to admit to himself that being that angry is exhausting. That it hurts like a punch in the face, a plate to the head, a bat to the balls. Hurts somewhere deep inside that Billy can't seem to reach.

## **We are, we are, we are, we are (Being us is okay)**

### **Author's Note:**

The amazing rarsablack on tumblr put together a great challenge for us Harringrovers where they gave us a set of lyrics and we wrote a fic either inspired by them or using them as dialogue. My lyrics are below. Enjoy!

Make our own rules, sticking like fools  
Dare you to call the police  
We can skip school 'cause we're too cool  
To be told we can't be free  
-'We Are' by Daya

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So. They have an uneasy truce. Billy's still on the outskirts, still sees the kids and Harrington having whispered conversations on the edges of his attention, more than once he enters a room and abrupt silence falls. Whatever.

Summer comes and he spends a lot of time driving Max around and smoking outside houses and cars while she does whatever she's doing. He gives her an awkward talk about boys and getting in trouble in a certain way and to tell him if that happens because he'll take care of it, of her, of the guy. Max turns so bright red it's almost worth the amount of pain it's causing him. She turns the music up so loud it hurts Billy's ears and they don't speak about it again. But he thinks maybe she's grateful when she brags to the others that he's

even better at Dig Dug than she is and makes him crush the high score to prove it.

But with summer comes long days with nothing to do but try to stay out of the house as much as possible. Max still has a curfew so after nine, Billy makes his own trouble.

Trouble that starts to involve Harrington more and more as the days get longer.

It starts with running into him at night, walking the streets like he's looking for something. The first few times, Billy blows past him in his car and gets a middle finger for the effort.

Then he starts slowing down, leaning out the window to exchange what they consider conversation which mainly consists of curse words and insults about the other's intelligence, physical prowess, and ability to do anything from shotgunning a beer to fucking a girl.

Eventually Billy starts pulling over and letting Steve lean against the car to bum a smoke. They keep shooting the shit but it expands to include their thoughts on school, the lack of sports teams worth following, and the sheer stupidity of Tommy Hill who managed to fall up a flight of stairs and break both arms the day after school let out.

There's an absence to Harrington, like he's somewhere else more often than not, like there's another world he's seeing and this one is just a distraction. It drives Billy a little crazy. It makes him look for moments that he can get Steve to focus on him, to see him, to be right here next to Billy, breathing the same air. Billy's done it since he first laid eyes on Steve. Like poking a bruise or picking at a scab. He can't help it.

The first time Billy succeeded involved beating the crap out of him. Billy's trying not to do that again so it's a game of trial and error.

There's a lot of errors so far.

The first time Steve gets in the car, it's because it's pouring down rain and Billy might be an massive asshole but he's trying not to be cruel

anymore. Steve sits there dripping, looking like a drowned cat, hair in his face and Billy realizes that he might have a problem.

Because all he can think about is licking the drops off Harrington's neck and pressing his lips to the black smudges under Harrington's eyes. He wants to find a place to park the car so they can both get soaked and then he wants to find a bed to roll around in until they're dry and then he wants to do it again.

It makes Billy a little distracted, not quite thinking about it when he takes a corner a little too sharp and the car fishtails, almost spins out before Billy gets it back under control. He glances over at Steve, apology on his tongue, but all he sees is bright eyes and an astonished grin. Steve's suddenly right there, all of him in the seat next to Billy, and there's a spark that runs down Billy's spine.

Harrington's an adrenaline junkie. If that's all it takes, well then. Billy's got this covered.

They start meeting up earlier and earlier in the day, sometimes Billy even picks up everyone from the arcade, cramming five kids in his backseat and Steve in the front just so they don't have to wait for Steve to drop them off before they start chasing their high.

He doesn't ask why Steve needs to peer over the edge to feel like he's still alive and in return, Steve doesn't question the bruises and busted lips Billy sometimes shows up with.

Billy drives them too fast, too hard around town for a while, a stack of traffic tickets in Billy's glovebox like he's trying for a record. Running red lights, driving backwards, blowing through neighborhoods like they're being chased. Anything to put that light in Steve's eyes, to send that spark down Billy's back. But they tire of it eventually. That's where Steve comes in. Living his whole life in Hawkins has its advantages, he knows all the ins and outs.

They sneak into a few movies through a back door and get kicked out for their trouble. They swipe more than a few packs of cigarettes from every store but Melvald's. Steve won't touch that one. Whatever.

They break into the high school and play one on one, race up and down the halls, sneak into the teacher's lounge, raid the lost and found.

They skinny dip in the quarry lake. Get drunk and smoke the last of Billy's pot. That night some of the secrets come out. Billy's got a black eye that he didn't have that afternoon. Steve's hands are shaking and he's brought that fucking bat like he might need it. They float on their backs and tell the moon their sad little stories. They sleep it off in the backseat of the Beamer and Billy locks the knowledge of how Steve looks sprawled against his side deep inside, in the place where the anger used to live.

They even egg Tommy's house, steal his car, smash his mailbox.

That one gets the police called on them big time. Turns out Steve knows the chief. They're home by dawn and Billy thinks there might be something to small towns after all. Hopper had taken one look at Steve, laughing and leaning against Billy in the station and just told them to stay off private property next time. Like seeing Steve there and happy and acting like a dumb teenager was worth the damage.

Privately Billy agrees.

Once school starts, it all changes.

Billy doesn't need to go to class, he gets As whether he shows up or not as long as he takes the tests. Every teacher just teaches the textbook so all he has to do is read the damn thing. It's not hard. But if Neil finds out, Billy's dead.

So Steve, who's "taking a year off before college", starts to fade away again and Billy starts picking fights with anybody dumb enough to catch his fists. They still meet up late at night but they have no time now. Billy has to wait until everyone's asleep, has to sneak out and back in before morning. They barely leave the neighborhood, sitting in Steve's car and drinking in silence, desperately grasping at memories of being alive, ghosts of their own freedom telling stories about their exploits to chase the high.

Steve goes on long rants about rules and authority and why the fuck

do they have to do what everybody wants them to when most people don't bother to look beyond their own backyard. They talk about monsters of this world and the other. They talk about leaving it all behind. They talk about being stuck here forever. Steve says that he feels like he doesn't know who he is. Billy says he feels like he'll never be able to be himself again. They get drunk. It doesn't have the same effect.

And then Steve asks him why they left California. And Billy tells him.

Tells about the clubs he used to sneak into, the drinks and the drugs and the girls and the boys.

Tells him about Max finding a joint in his room. About Neil searching for more drugs and instead finding out that his son was a queer. Tells him about hands around his throat and the way it felt to feel like he was going to die at his father's hands.

Steve doesn't say anything. Finishes his beer. Snubs out his cigarette. Leans over and captures Billy's mouth in a kiss that feels like driving too fast, like breaking into a school, like winning a fight and stealing a car and jumping off a cliff all at once.

He realizes in that moment that he knows exactly who Steve is now. That Steve knows who he is, too. All the messy, dark places. All the soft, vulnerable spots.

Steve, who can't sleep and just wants to help, who goes weeks without seeing his parents, who only feels real when he's running headlong into danger, who'd take a bullet for his friends, who's trying to figure out how to be what he wants to be instead of what he thinks he should be.

Billy, who fights too much and gives too much of himself away to anybody who doesn't demand it, who can't admit he might give a shit about his sister, who can't stop hating himself for not hating his father, who doesn't know how to be gentle because being rough has always been safer.

Billy and Steve who are kissing in a car two miles from Billy's house. Out in the open where anyone could see in a world that's full of

monsters.

Billy feels sparks race down his spine and out to his fingertips. He feels the warmth of the night air, the weight of a body on top of his own. And Steve's right there with him, eyes bright, all of him in the seat right next to Billy, astonished smile pressed against his lips.

The night stretches out in front of them like an empty road.